

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 PER-01 /076 W

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R 050955Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6366

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 1323

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SF, LT

SUBJECT: TRANSKEI/LESOTHO BORDER POSTS STILL CLOSED TO TRANSIT
TRAFFIC

REF: MASERU 1309 (NOTAL),

1. FOREIGN MINISTER MOLAPO CALLED IN CHARGE TO BRIEF CHARGE
AGAIN ON CONTINUING TRANSKEI/LESOTHO BORDER POST PROBLEMS.
GOL OFFICIAL REPORTS FROM QACHA'S NEK AND QUTHING STATE THAT
BORDER POSTS ARE CLOSED TO TRANSITING TRAVELERS OR CARRIERS
FROM LESOTMO TO RSA (INCLUDING MATATIELE RSA ENCLAVE IN TRANSKEI)
OR REVERSE. TRAVEL TO TRANSKEI ITSELF FROM LESOTHO OR REVERSE
(I.E. NOT TO OR FROM RSA) REPORTEDLY NOT RPT NOT AFFECTED.

2. MINISTER CLAIMED THIS SUTATION WILL HAVE SEVERE CONSEQUENCES
FOR LESOTHO IF CONTINUED FOR SUBSTANTIAL PERIOD OF TIME. LACK OF
MOVEMENT OF SUPPLIES INTO SOUTHERN AND SOUTHEASTERN AREAS OF
LESOTHO FROM RSA WILL RESULT IN DEPLETION OF SUPPLIES AND, IN
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LONG RUN, WILL HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT ON LESOTHO'S CUSTOMS RECEIPTS

UNDER THE CUSTOMS AGREEMENT. MINISTER MAINTAINED THAT LESOTHO'S SHARE OF CUSTOMS RECEIPTS HAD JUMPED LAST YEAR FROM R17 MILLION TO R32 MILLION AND CONCERN IS THAT DECREASED IMPORTS FROM RSA WILL CUT INTO GOL SHARE NEXT YEAR. SINCE MAJOR PORTION OF TRAVELERS AFFECTED ARE BASOTHO MINERS HEADING FOR THE MINES IN RSA, MINISTER SAID CUT-OFF OF TRANSIT TRAVEL ALSO POSES SERIOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC THREAT IN FORM OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND LOST EARNINGS IN REPATRIATED WAGES.

3. MINISTER REPEATED GOL STAND ON CLOSING OF BORDER POSTS VIZ. THAT THE MATTER IS ONE WHICH SAG MUST ANSWER FOR AND CORRECT BECAUSE OF SA'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CUSTOMS AGREEMENT WHEREIN THE BORDER POSTS IN QUESTION ARE MENTIONED AS AUTHORIZED PASSAGE POINTS. HE SAID HE HAD SENT A COMMUNICATION TO SAG BUT STILL HAD NO REPLY. MOLAPO SAID SAG IS CLEARLY BEHIND TRANSKEI MOVES TO BLOCK FREE TRANSIT OF TRANSKEI TERRITORY. HE SAID PRETORIA WANTS TO PROVOKE A "WAR SITUATION" BETWEEN TRANSKEI AND LESOTHO.

4. MOLAPO ALSO BRIEFED ACTING BHC ALONG THESE SAME LINES. NO REQUEST FOR ACTION WAS MADE BEYOND SENDING INFORMATION CONVEYED TO WASHINGTON AND LONDON.
STOKES

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